



Department of Justice

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Federal and State Officials Meet on Jekyll for National Methamphetamine Awareness Day on November 30, 2006

Lisa Godbey Wood, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, and Paul Ignatius Perez, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, together with GBI Director Vernon M. Keenan, today announced that they will meet with the Southern States Drug Investigators on Jekyll Island on November 30, 2006, which is National Methamphetamine Awareness Day. The Department of Justice sponsors National Methamphetamine Awareness Day in order to generate awareness about the damaging effects of methamphetamine abuse on individuals, families and American communities. Education and public outreach are at the heart of the Department's national drug control strategy, and National Methamphetamine Awareness Day will play an important role in highlighting the nationwide efforts to increase awareness and decrease demand of this highly addictive and dangerous drug.

As part of National Methamphetamine Awareness Day, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales will host a national event with federal, state, local and community leaders to discuss the

broader impact that methamphetamine production and use is having on our communities. Across the nation, U.S. Attorneys, along with state and local leaders, will coordinate a variety of educational events targeting their specific communities. Wood, Perez and GBI Director Keenan will mark the occasion with a joint address to state and local methamphetamine investigators at a conference being held on Jekyll Island, Georgia.

In the Southern District of Georgia, Wood noted that the prosecution of criminals involved in methamphetamine manufacturing and trafficking has been a high priority since 2002, when her office initiated Operation Speed Limit, a comprehensive program designed to bring together federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to pool resources and coordinate prosecutions. Wood stated that “under Operation Speed Limit, over 250 defendants have been indicted for various crimes involving the illicit manufacturing of methamphetamine in clandestine laboratories, the trafficking of meth from Mexico and other parts of the United States, and the sale of meth by drug dealers in local communities. And, in the approximately four years since its inception, there has been a 100% conviction rate in meth cases.” She also commented that in 2004 the District received recognition from the Department for the success of Operation Speed Limit.

U.S. Attorney Perez stated, “We have seen a steady increase in the distribution and use of meth in Florida. Not only does this drug destroy people and families, it can also harm entire communities. Prosecution is part of the solution, but awareness and prevention also play a key role in stopping this highly addictive drug.”

According to GBI Director Keenan, methamphetamine is the fastest growing illegal drug in Georgia. Keenan said, “There’s good news and bad news related to the meth problem in our state. The good news is the number of clandestine meth labs discovered across the state has declined as a result of legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly. The bad news is smuggled meth

from Mexico has increased significantly here, making Georgia a major distribution point for meth for the entire east coast of the United States. Governor Sonny Perdue recently announced his intentions to double the size of the GBI's Meth Task Force he created this year by proposing 15 additional GBI agents to investigate meth trafficking. These additional agents will work with the U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration in an effort to combat the meth distribution network in Georgia."

Keenan added, "Georgia law enforcement, with the support of the Georgia General Assembly and Governor Perdue, is doing what it can to address the meth problem, but increased public awareness of methamphetamine will be a key in helping reduce the spread of this dangerous drug."

In order to increase the impact of the message of National Methamphetamine Awareness Day, the Department of Justice is partnering with a number of state and local governments, as well as with private sector and non-profit entities, and has created a new methamphetamine awareness web site: <http://www.usdoj.gov/methawareness>.

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